

STOP BACKYARD BURNING!

Backyard trash burning is a common method to dispose of garbage, particularly in rural areas. This brochure provides information about:

- ❖ Health concerns from backyard trash burning
- ❖ Better trash disposal options available to you

Backyard burning of trash in a barrel, pile or outdoor boiler releases smoke into the air. The content of the smoke depends on the trash that went into the fire, the temperature of the fire and the available oxygen.

Trash fires in burn barrels can smolder and as a result produce greater amounts of harmful chemicals than a very active, “roaring” fire. Harmful chemicals can also be present in the ash from the fire.

Trash containing plastics, polystyrene (such as foam cups), CCA pressure-treated wood, and bleached or colored papers are examples of materials that can produce harmful chemicals when burned. For example, when CCA pressure treated wood (which contains arsenic) is burned, arsenic can be released in the smoke or remain in the ash.

A study by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the NYS Department of Health (DOH) and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) measured the types and amounts of many chemicals in the smoke from burn barrels. For some of those chemicals, burning about 10 pounds a day of trash in a household burn barrel may produce as much air pollution as a modern, well-controlled incinerator burning 400,000 pounds a day of trash!!

The US Environmental Protection Agency also has estimated the emissions of dioxins and furans from a variety of sources in the United States. As shown below, emissions of dioxins and furans from backyard burning alone are estimated to be greater than for all other sources combined for the years 2002-2004.



Who Is At Risk?

Smoke from any fire can affect your health, your family’s health and your neighbor’s health. The smoke from backyard burning is released close to the ground where people can easily breathe it. The smoke from the fire can deposit chemicals on garden vegetables and garden soil. People can be exposed to those chemicals by eating fruits and vegetables grown near the trash-fire or in garden soil tilled with the ashes. Young children may be at greater risk than adults because of their playing behaviors, their small size and their developing bodies.

The chances of developing health effects from contact (exposure) with smoke from burn barrel fires depends on the how much smoke a person contacts, how a person is exposed (e.g., breathing the smoke or eating vegetables affected by the smoke) and how long and often the person is exposed. Some people may be more or less sensitive than others to chemicals in smoke. People exposed to smoke could experience burning eyes and nose, coughing, nausea, headaches, or dizziness. Some people find the odors produced by burn barrels disagreeable, and they may experience discomfort, headaches, and nausea. Smoke can trigger asthma attacks. People with heart and lung conditions are at greater risks for health effects. Repeated exposures to pollutants in burn barrel smoke may occur when people burn trash on a regular basis, and this may increase the risk of chronic health problems. Also, unattended burn barrels or backyard burning can cause accidental fires.

Information from the EPA/DOH/DEC study showed that smoke from burning trash in a barrel contains particulate matter, carbon monoxide, hydrogen chloride, hydrogen cyanide, benzene, styrene, formaldehyde, arsenic, lead, chromium, benzo(a)pyrene, dioxins, furans and PCBs. Some of these chemicals are found in smoke from any fire. Although substances such as particulate matter, carbon monoxide and formaldehyde can cause immediate health effects with enough exposure, some chemicals such as dioxin can build up in foods and in your body. Some of these chemicals can remain in the environment for a long time and can remain on your property (for example, soil outside and dust inside your home).

HOW CAN BURNING TRASH GET CHEMICALS INTO YOUR BODY?

- ❖ Breathing the smoke.
- ❖ Eating food contaminated by smoke and ash.
- ❖ Playing in areas of contaminated soil or dust.



HOW CAN CHEMICALS FROM BURNING TRASH GET INTO YOUR FOOD?

- ❖ Smoke and ash can settle on fruits and vegetables.
- ❖ If ash is mixed into the garden soil, chemicals can be taken up by crops.
- ❖ Chemicals can enter milk, eggs or meat if farm animals eat contaminated feed or soil.

BREAK THE HABIT! AND STOP BACKYARD BURNING.

Here are some simple tips to avoid the need to burn your trash:

REDUCE

Avoid waste. Buy fewer items and select products with the least packaging.

RE-USE

Buy products that can be re-used and/or come in containers that can be re-filled.

RECYCLE

Learn about your community's recycling programs. Dispose of your recyclables accordingly, and urge others to do the same.

COMPOST

Compost plant-based kitchen and yard waste.

DISPOSE

Hire a sanitation service that will collect and properly dispose of your trash and recyclables, deliver them to your local transfer station, or work with your neighbors to develop a service that fits your community.

Use the best waste disposal practice established in your municipality!!

Be considerate of your neighbors!!

For your health, the health of your family and your neighbors and your community's environment, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and the NYS Department of Health urge you to **STOP BACKYARD BURNING.**

Burning Is Not Only a Bad Idea; It Could be Against the Law.

NYS regulations prohibit the open burning of garbage (defined as food-related animal and vegetable waste) or of household rubbish (NYS Codes, Rules and Regulations, §215.2):

In any city or village,

In any town with a population more than 20,000.

This regulation also prohibits open burning of rubbish for salvage or for disposal of rubbish generated by industrial/commercial (other than agricultural) activities.

Some local governments also have their own laws that restrict or prohibit private citizens from burning trash. Check with your own local officials for any laws that may affect you and your neighborhood.

For more information about waste disposal or burning regulations, contact your NYS DEC Regional Air Pollution Control Engineer:

Region 1 (Nassau, Suffolk counties) 631-444-0205

Region 2 (New York City) 718-482-4944

Region 3 (Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester counties) 845-256-3048

Region 4 (Albany, Columbia, Delaware, Greene, Montgomery, Otsego, Rensselaer, Schenectady, Schoharie counties) 518-357-2045

Region 5 (Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Saratoga, Warren, Washington counties) 518-897-1200

Region 6 (Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, St. Lawrence counties) 315-785-2513

Region 7 (Broome, Cayuga, Chenango, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, Oswego, Tioga, Tompkins counties) 315-426-7552

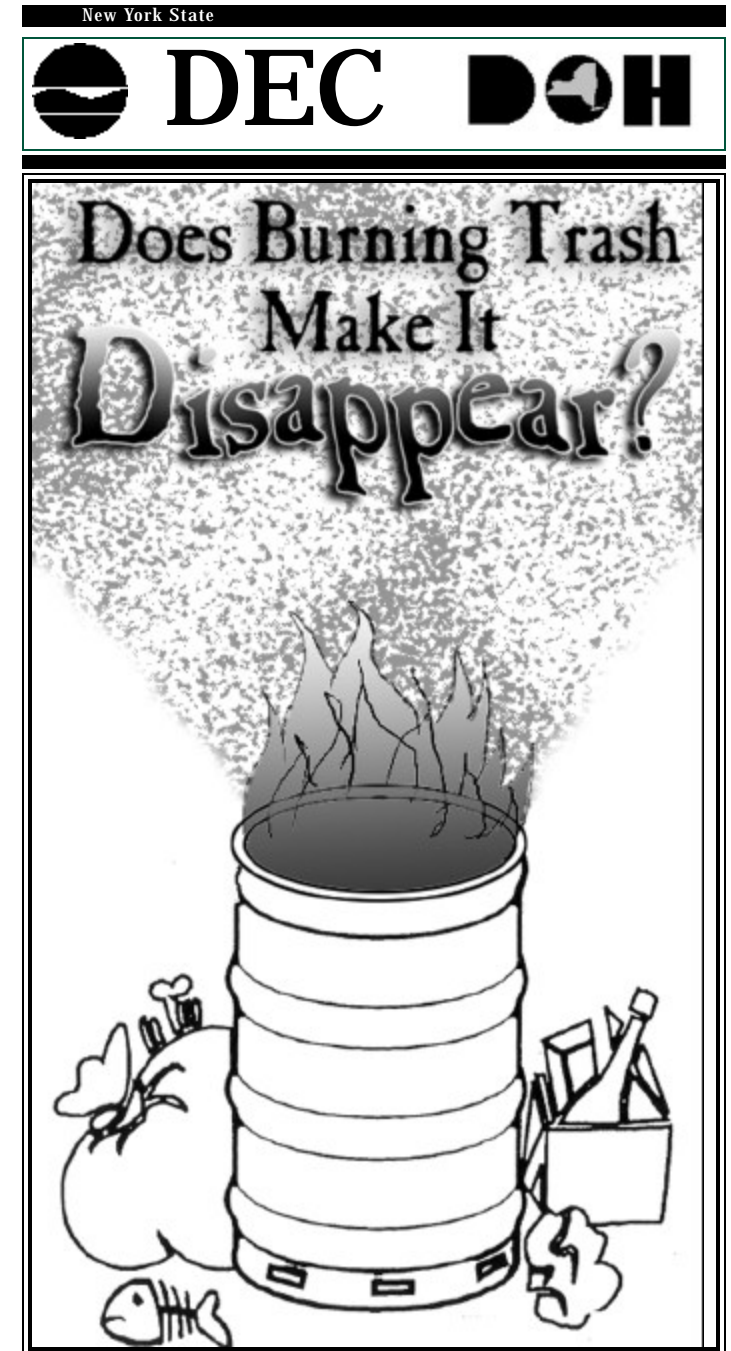
Region 8 (Chemung, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, Yates counties) 716-226-2466

Region 9 (Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara, Wyoming counties) 716-851-7130

Or visit DEC on the web at <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/>

For more information about health effects and exposure to chemicals, contact the NYSDOH, Center for Environmental Health at (800) 458-1158.

Or visit DOH on the web at <http://www.health.state.ny.us/>



New York State
George E. Pataki, Governor
Department of Environmental Conservation
Erin M. Crotty, Commissioner
New York State Department of Health
Antonio C. Novello, M.D., M.P.H., Dr. P.H., Commissioner